

Sedona Community Plan Update Public Meeting
Imagine Sedona – 2020 & Beyond
Community Workshop
West Sedona School - Multi-Purpose Room/Cafeteria
570 Posse Ground Road, Sedona
Wednesday, September 21, 2011 - 6:00 p.m.

Public Participants (excludes those listed below): 25

Committee Members:

Chairman Jim Eaton, Vice Chairman Jon Thompson and Committee Members Mike Bower, Angela LeFevre, Marty Losoff, Barbara Litrell, Elemer Magaziner, Gerhard Mayer, Judy Reddington and Rio Robson

Councilors:

Mayor Rob Adams and Councilors Dennis Rayner and Mike Ward

Commissioners:

Arts & Culture:

Ed Uzumeckis

Budget Oversight:

Lin Ennis

Historic Preservation:

Charles Schudson and Brynn Unger

Housing:

Anne Leap and Sandy Moriarty

Planning & Zoning:

John Griffin, Scott Jablow and Norm Taylor

Sustainability:

Marlene Rayner, Charles Schudson and Ernie Strauch

Committees:

Art in Public Places:

Mei Wei Wong

Volunteers:

Sandy Moriarty

Staff:

Kathy Levin, Donna Puckett, Mike Raber and Andi Welsh

INTRODUCTION:

The workshop began at 6:14 p.m. and Chairman Eaton welcomed the public and indicated that this is the second of several workshops on the Sedona Community Plan -- this one is on *Community* and we will find out by the end of this program what that means. Chairman Eaton then introduced the members of the Citizens Steering Committee and explained that they are citizens, not politicians or paid consultants; they just volunteered for this and there are some really good people working on the Committee.

Mike Raber indicated that the Citizens Steering Committee has been doing a tremendous job and one thing that has come up many times is that we are not using consultants on this update; it is strictly a citizens group and we are pretty proud of that. He explained that the Community Plan is our General Plan required by the State and it is our vision of the future that tells us where we should and shouldn't grow. The State requires us to update it every ten years, but we are also updating the plan because conditions and priorities change over time. This is our second workshop in a series of seven over the next couple of months, and we are beginning to transition out of the first phase of who and what we are and move into more of what we can be and what our possibilities are as a community, so we are kind of on that cusp right now. Following the workshops, we will be looking at what we are hearing from the community and what it all means in terms of community values, priorities and goals, and then we will build on that to create some alternative futures for the community to respond to, and finally create a common vision from that, hopefully by the middle of next year, which will become a Community Plan that will go through the state-mandated hearing process with the Planning & Zoning Commission, the City Council and the public vote, so it is important that we engage the community every step of the way.

Mike Raber then explained that the workshop themes are based on what we have been hearing from you, plus things we know need to be covered in the Plan, so tonight we are focusing on *Community* and this is what we have been hearing a lot about from you, and many of our displays provide some samples of past

planning efforts that were done when we focused on creating places for the public to gather, but defining community isn't all about those places. It is also about everything from arts & culture to our history, so there is a wide range of things that go into making community. Each table has a series of questions that are related to community and we want to ensure we have a facilitator and recorder at each table. We also have several members of the community here who are very experienced in different facets of building community, including Roger Eastman, Carol Wyant, Brynn Unger, Natalia Molina and Andi Welsh who can help stimulate your discussions a little bit.

Mike then explained that the tables will discuss the questions for about an hour, and then the recorders will summarize what they are heard from the group. Each table has a map and you can feel free to mark on the maps; it is not something you have to do, but some people are more comfortable with maps than others. They are a tool for the Committee, so mark it up as you like and Mike Bower is going to give you an example of the type of discussion that can take place with those maps.

PRESENTATION:

Mike Bower thanked the public for attending and thanked those that keep coming as kind of a core group. The more the Committee gets deeper into it, the more the group has helped by participating and learning along with the Committee, because the Citizens Steering Committee is large and we are finding our way along with the rest of the community.

Mike showed an aerial picture of the Sedona area and pointed out Oak Creek, S.R. 179 and S.R. 89A, Uptown and the "Y", and 89A going through West Sedona. He then explained that he wanted to present a sample discussion that they might find themselves having at the table and indicated that the Committee debated if "community" is about place or about shared interests. Place may be about meeting friends at a coffee shop or maybe it is chatting with some co-volunteers if you work with fundraising for a homeless shelter, which is more of a shared interest, but obviously both, and with the Internet, there are online communities that are really mindsets more so than places, but for our purposes in community planning, it is both.

Mike indicated that the best type of discussion is usually the mindsets and interests together with place, so zooming in on a particular neighborhood, going up Coffee Pot Drive and turning left on Sanborn, then turning on Borden and pretending that is his house, Mike identified where a lot of people park, because they don't have to pay the Red Rock Pass and there are some beautiful trails that head off from there, and a few people cut through the forest in a few places. If he walks a mile from his house, he can access groceries, and in terms of where he meets his friends and chats, it is mostly at the trailhead with their dogs on a morning walk. On his way here today, he saw a friend who was struggling to get a large suitcase in the car, so he helped the elderly woman get it in and they chatted a little bit, and those things are all finding community -- all of the things we are talking about, like where you access the forest, where you gather to chat with neighbors. Do you know your neighbors, do you help neighbors and do they help you?

Mike then pointed out land that was an old leach field for the neighborhood that was sold and subdivided, but doesn't have houses on it yet, and asked what if we wanted a community garden gathering place? Maybe instead of being on poop patrol by the side of the parking lot, he would like to have a little garden vegetable stand to trade vegetables and news, etc. Mike then encouraged the participants to have fun at their table and let the questions spark them. He also urged them to find their house and start learning how to use the maps, because it will get a little mappier as we try to take all of your great ideas and come up with some concepts that we would like for you to help us evaluate.

PARTICIPANTS' BREAKOUT TABLE DISCUSSIONS:

The participants began their breakout table discussions at 6:26 p.m. and concluded at 7:38 p.m.

CLOSING:

Vice Chairman Thompson indicated that it was great to see everyone so actively involved and explained that the recorder from each table is going to give a summary of what went on at their table, and as the recorder for one time, he will start. There were a lot of general comments about different things, but they

did a lot of drawing on the map and talked about where they are from and how they get to where they are going. It is fair to say that they spent most of the time talking about the idea of centers, whether it was the "string of pearls" concept or a single location that would be a plaza-type area where people could gather - it was about gathering places. They also talked about the effect that S.R. 89A has on kind of spreading us out, and the thing they came to was that the idea of the smaller locations stretched out along 89A that people could get to might have a great advantage, because people within a walking radius could get there and at least have their needs taken care of, but they would still need some kind of place for all of Sedona to call their main plaza or gathering place, so there were advantages to both, and they were spending a lot of time trying to figure out the pros and cons of those different things. Additionally, one of the comments was that something that divides us as a community is communication, and one person said that one of the issues is that they need to figure out who the key informants are in the community, the people who have contacts that have a sense of community or are connected to media, etc., to get the word out, because a lot of times, people don't hear what is going on and don't get the excitement building around events they can go to.

Vice Chairman Thompson then asked if he had missed anything and Mike Bower added that one interesting thing that was brought up was that the sense of community was heightened when they actually see people that they work with all day at the store or at events or the school, but there was a point in Sedona's growth where it became too expensive for a lot of buddies and friends to stay here, so they still see them, but they have lost a certain sense of community, since they are living in Camp Verde or Rimrock, etc. It was one of the answers to the question about the things that actually divide us or unite us, and it speaks to the whole affordable housing issue sort of indirectly.

Elemer Magaziner indicated that he could repeat a lot of what Vice Chairman Thompson said, but he will just add the things that are different. One of them was that gatherings need to be intergenerational, so they had a lot of emphasis on community gatherings that are Chautauqua-like or whatever, but they need to be designed so they are intergenerational with all ages showing up. The other thing they talked about that was different was that there should be an easy way to get to all of these nice places that draw people, so they can get there by bicycle or by walking, and you can get to a place like that when it is no further than a mile from where you live, so there is easy access and you can go from one to the other without a lot of hassle. They also drew on the map and realized that the hill from Uptown to West Sedona is a barrier, and they had all kinds of ideas from rickshaws to chairlifts and moving sidewalks, but the point was that it would be a difficult thing for some people who couldn't make it up the hill, and they wanted to make sure that all of these wonderful places that attract people to walk and mingle were all connected and not separated by some geographic thing. The other thing that was different was that they wanted shade in all places where people walk, and there was an issue that came up at the end, when somebody said build the community from within, and he would rephrase that as there are no unknown isolated people in the community. There are people who are homebound or would have difficulty escaping if there was some disaster, so the vision was that there are no unknown isolated people, somebody knows about them when they need help in case there is some kind of emergency. The only other thing that was kind of different was to have a place where art is shown with rotating exhibits, and every time there is a rotation to a new collection of art, there is a big celebration that accompanies that, so that would draw people to a place of pride, and this would not be business-oriented, so nobody would be pursuing you to buy a piece of art; you would be there for the enjoyment and celebration. Otherwise, it was pretty much what Vice Chairman Thompson said.

Mike Raber indicated that they went through most of the questions and covered a lot of ground, but in terms of what is community, one thing was having neighbors you could trust and people who take care of other people. There is a sense that that is starting to be missed; it is getting harder to know your neighbors. Additionally, they need a walkable S. R. 89A; sidewalks that face the streets and not in lighting need to be pulled back, and some kind of buffer between the sidewalks and the street was an issue that came up as far as things that go against community, and they want amenities to be close, because having all their needs in close proximity to where they live also creates a sense of community. Regarding a couple of types of places that create community, the library was suggested as a major focal point for events and programs, and with the library here, there is a lot of activity going on and that seems to be a focal area. The Senior Center is another one, so as far as gathering places go, the Heart of

Sedona area around Tlaquepaque, along the creek and around the bridge was cited as one great place to look at for a major gathering spot, and the Safeway area and that whole West Sedona region in central West Sedona was another. Additionally, 89A gathering places really need to address how to get across the highway and that is going to be a very big issue, because trying to unite the two sides of the highway is important, so that will be a big consideration, plus just the fact that 89A is probably way too wide as an inviting sort of street space. Another thing was more on where community gets started; they mentioned the Basha's - Safeway area and another big issue was how will we park in those areas and create some public spaces out of that in redevelopment. The other thing that was noted was Sunset Park is a small park, but people really connect there, so that plus with the trail connection to the nearby Forest Service, it is really cited as a major community spot. They then moved on to what is missing, and New Frontiers and great meeting places like that really kind of shut off nearby residents with walls and other barriers, so there is not a lot of connectivity in the community. Another thing missing is that community involvement seems to consist of a lot of the same people; it is very hard to get the interest levels going with new people, and an invisible creek was cited as another stumbling block to community -- not being able to see the creek from vehicles or from a lot of pedestrian paths. It kind of ended on that, except he wanted to note that regarding events, they discussed that they aren't integrated into central gathering places and they really need to be. They cited the Tequa Plaza that has events all the time and that seems to be a missing link for Sedona. Another place that was cited was Clarkdale that has a real central spot that makes events work in a central location, which we are kind of missing.

Barbara Litrell indicated that she would try to decipher some of the things that were different from what you have heard, and in looking at what community means "connectivity" was the important word discussed, whether they were connecting through interests or volunteer organizations or connecting through neighborhoods or through work. It seemed like there were lots of different ways you could build different communities for yourself and your neighbors. The whole thing was connecting and caring, and one participant talked about having to develop specific techniques to connect, because people tend to not want to ask people for help; they want to be self-sufficient in their homes, and the person was talking about purposely going next door to borrow something and purposely asking for something, so neighbors feel like they know you and have helped you, and there is a bond that forms forever, so it is kind of like stripping yourself of your ego and going to ask for help to begin to get that kind of relationship going, plus doing things that you get satisfaction from and organizations that you belong to. They also talked about walkability of the community and that has already come up, so she won't dwell on that. Limited access to Posse Grounds was discussed and brought them to the discussion of how we need bike paths that aren't hilly, bumpy and difficult. A triathlon and marathon athlete was at the table with another whole lens through which to look at community in terms of attracting athletes, even just the trainers, so there could be a training center where people come, but we don't currently have the kind of infrastructure needed for training, and our neighborhoods are dead-ended in so many places that it is difficult to find ways to connect, and taking it all the way out to the Wastewater Treatment Plant where there are areas out there that will be in constructed wetlands, but how can we make everything multi-use properties, so be thinking about a lot of different ways that we can do that. They also talked about a recreation center; Cottonwood has set a standard for a community place, so it is something for us to continue to look at. They also talked about diversification and a diversified community, and how you celebrate and work together if you diversify a community, whether it is ethnically, culturally, intergenerationally, etc.; we need to find ways to celebrate that. They talked about events and closing Uptown and creating a pedestrian mall for a certain time or a day, a hot air balloon festival out somewhere near the Wastewater Treatment Plant or between here and Cottonwood, and they figured out a way to get people from Uptown to Tlaquepaque and that was a zip line.

Angela LeFevre indicated that they talked about Form-Based Codes and different ways of looking at how community is built, and they centered on West Sedona and how lacking community has been, and the fact that there have been discussions already and it is not too late. They also started using the map and without realizing it, they actually drew their own string of pearls and made a continuous string from Uptown to the Cultural Park, and noted that if the City could own those lands, it would be more aggressive. She felt there was a sense of frustration; three people have been involved in planning the past few years and have seen opportunities for the City to do something, but it hasn't been done, so we need to give the City some teeth or make sure that they do something rather than just talk, and these

areas would be the centers from which to build community, and that was kind of the overlying theme. Another was how do we encourage locals to gather at plazas, most of the commercial area is built-up, but one definite thing was that they did not want big box stores. They also want to keep 89A as part of this whole concept and have trees and shade to encourage walking, and that was based on the idea of being pedestrian-friendly. They also touched on what they liked and the idea that everyone comes from different backgrounds and has their own baggage, which tends to make life sometimes contentious here, and they said to talk to those with voices on the different issues. A good example was Uptown and people wanting to put some trees there, but businesses didn't like it, because it might hide their signs or access, etc. and that was an issue. They also talked about the Cultural Park and thought that was very important, and they thought a big square, like in Prescott where there is always something going on, really enhances the community, but whether or not that means we should have that here too, the result was having places where we could meet and that was definitely very strong. The map shows where they would like for the City to go, but people say we can't afford it, then somebody brought up the high school, and that years ago, people said we couldn't afford a high school, but it happened. They also touched on the arts and having more of an arts community supported in Uptown for instance. And finally, there was a feeling that Uptown is too devoted to the visitors and needs to be more user-friendly for the residents too.

Kathy Levin indicated that this table distinguished itself from some of the comments you have already heard. These citizens felt they are finding community in their own neighborhoods and they are working to get to know each other better. Their example was that a couple of residents in that area started meeting regularly and visiting each other; they have now developed a relationship with the Wesleyan Church and the Church provided two acres for a community garden, and they are meeting regularly, so they are making their own community. It is a fine example of community starting pretty close to home. They also felt that other places of community exist and it may not be necessary to build any. They exist at New Frontiers, the Chocoma Tree, the Post Office and Basha's; these are the common places where they intersect and check-in with each other, and they stand as places where they have a reason to go, and secondarily, they have community. In contrast with that, they also discussed the Cultural Park and felt that it should be resurrected as a non-profit without commercial interests on it, and there was partial interest in seeing outdoor activities occur once again. They discussed perhaps having a small boutique conference center that would have a niche market of maybe 500 to 1,000 patrons, and it would be distinguishable from others and enable Sedona to go to the next level with small conferences of a professional nature, and when the conference center wasn't being used to attract business, it could act as a community facility to be used for community purposes.

Marty Losoff indicated that several things discussed were outside of Sedona and they indicated that community is a mindset in a variety of places; you can't just isolate it to one or the other in your own thinking. He was surprised that in all of the meetings up to now, we have heard about the Heart of Sedona and the community place it would become, but they strongly endorsed the string of pearls concept, starting at the high school and going through the "Y", and actually designing it by having each community designate the shapes and sizes with each one focusing on a different activity, but all of them encouraging businesses, community and residents to prosper, because of the locale and local aspect of it all, and having footpaths, adding the ability to drive vehicles that will be available in 10 years and will be energy efficient, the little turbo cars, bicycles and things of that nature. They also indicated that one of the nice things about the string of pearls is that they already exist in several of these places, for example, the high school, the Szechuan Plaza with their outdoor performances, the Hyatt and Hillside, and then you go around the neighborhoods with a transportation system that will take people, residents and tourists, who want to get to the other end and can stop along the way at the various pearls to enjoy what is going on, and that was a very big concept that was elaborated on. They also talked about community and thought the answer to uniting the community is education, making sure that everybody is educated to the advantages of what we are and who we are and how these pearls can bring us all together as a community for residents, tourists and businesses. They also indicated that people come to Sedona for its beauty, but stay for its arts, obviously encouraging the artistic community to be involved in these pearls and certainly community events. There wasn't a strong feeling for major events; the feeling was that we have a lot of things going on in the City now and we should build upon them. We have the film festival and maybe there are other things we can do with these pearls that can build a sense of activity, but not have major events. The feeling is that right now if there is a major event, the residents stay home and let

the tourists go to it, because it gets too crowded, but if it was done in these pearls or neighborhood plazas, then perhaps more residents would take part in them. Aside from that, there was not much that hasn't been talked about.

Vice Chairman Thompson noted that a wide range of topics was covered for community, which is a pretty broad topic, so the Committee will have a lot to work with. The Vice Chairman then indicated that the following upcoming workshops had been published in the newspaper and fliers; however, there have been a couple of changes in the schedule. The two workshops that were scheduled for next week have been moved to October and November. The next workshop will be on *Economy and Prosperity* at the Jewish Community of Sedona and the Verde Valley on October 5th, so it is a chance to figure out how we want to pay for all of this good stuff and what we want our community to be like. Vice Chairman Thompson also noted that the schedule is always on the website at sedonaaz.gov/planupdate. He then indicated that there is still a limited number of "party-in-a-box" available and explained how they can be used and their contents, and if interested, Kathy Levin is the person to contact.

The Vice Chairman was asked if the Committee wanted the notes left with the maps and he responded yes, they could be left on the tables. A participant then asked if the Committee considered having a separate workshop on the arts, and he explained that the Committee looked at all of the input received in the earlier meetings and tried to address the various themes that came out of those, in addition to looking at the subjects that are required in the Community Plan. Obviously, there were only so many workshops the Committee could do and we couldn't cover everything, but the Committee felt that the arts was a subject of *Community* and some of the other workshops we will be doing, and you may have noticed that there were some questions that related to a museum, etc., so we did our best to incorporate that and at this point, we don't have a specific workshop for the arts. Also, the Arts Commission is going through some changes and we want to meet with the Commission after they get going, but if that is something that is important to you based on the feedback, we may have to consider a separate one on the arts.

The workshop ended at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna A. S. Puckett, *Recording Secretary*

Date